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## *House of Representatives* **Honoring International Woman's Day**

OF TEXAS  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
*Tuesday, March 8, 2005*

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. Poe) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, today is International Women's Day, a day we honor women and their contributions to the American way of life. American women, from the frontier era to the space age, have steadily blazed the trails and stayed the course to bring recognition of the accomplishments of women not only in the United States but across the world and across the seas.

Each of us can identify at least one woman who forever marked our life in a positive way. My grandmother lived to her late nineties and was always the most influential person in my life. In the 1950s, after my grandfather was killed by a drunk driver, she went to work as a clerk in the ladies' ready-to-wear section of a department store; and while she would have continued to work there, they forced her to quit at the age of 75.

She taught me the values of public service, and this is why I have dedicated my life to public service. She was the most influential woman in my life. All of us have people like that, women who have influenced us in a positive way. Those American women, they are a rare breed.

In other countries, like Iraq, where I recently traveled on a fact-finding mission, women recount the decades of torture and execution and oppression they experienced under the tyrant and dictator Saddam Hussein. For most women it has only been since our toppling of that vicious and murderous tyrant that they have been allowed to pursue opportunities that we take for granted, like employment. On the historic election day, which I was privileged to observe this year, for many Iraqi women this was their first chance to ever vote.

Yet as encouraging as these illustrations are, millions of women are victims to a destructive force known as domestic violence. In fact, in the United States alone, according to the National Domestic Violence Hotline, nearly one-third of American women report being physically or sexually abused by a boyfriend or a husband at some point in their life. Moreover, the Department of Justice's statistics show that in 2003 alone 9 percent of all murder victims were killed by their spouse or their partners. Eighty percent of those victims were females.

Mr. Speaker, this is a serious problem, not just for our Nation's women but also for our Nation's families. It is a serious problem for children, children that live in those homes with all of that serious, serious turmoil.

Domestic abuse scars children through the images of violence and fighting; the ramifications if they try to intervene; the emotional anguish they suffer for years. Domestic abuse in some cases results in withdrawal or unhealthy perfectionism, and in other cases they act it out.

The American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Violence and the Family concluded in 1996 that a child's exposure to the father abusing the mother is the strongest risk factor for transmitting violent behavior from one generation to the next. In addition, the American Medical Association has calculated that family violence costs taxpayers in the range of \$5 billion to \$10 billion a year in medical expenses.

It is not only a family problem and a criminal problem; it is a health issue. Domestic violence costs us in police and court costs, shelters, foster care, sick leave, and nonproductivity.

As a former judge and founder of the Congressional Victims' Rights Caucus, this epidemic is of great alarm to me. I believe we must work to eliminate this domestic abuse while protecting the victims that have already resulted from this trend.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that all of us on this day, as we recognize the worth of women, are determined to make sure that they live in a safe environment in their homes.